

Youth Involvement and Action Transition Subcommittee
DRAFT REPORT
12/27/05

Process

The Youth Involvement and Action Transition Subcommittee was comprised of energetic and dedicated members, including 10 youth and young adults, representing 30% of the membership of the subcommittee. The subcommittee met as a full group three times, on December 7th, 15th, and 21st. The Chair and three Vice-Chairs met as a planning/leadership team two additional times. An additional meeting for youth members ONLY took place on December 20th, facilitated by Doug Ackley of Teen Empowerment and Keenan Allen of Pathways to Peace. This "youth only" meeting was attended by more than 25 young people who are deeply interested in continuing to have a voice in city government. On Monday, December 19th, a smaller representative group of the sub-committee conducted day-long focus groups with youth services agencies, county representatives, school district employees, and staff from City Hall, with the intention of providing meaningful information to the Mayor-Elect as he makes initial plans for the City of Rochester. In addition to the members of the transition subcommittee and the youth participants, the following agencies contributed recommendations and support for the new city administration:

Rochester Works – John Premo
Mount Hope Family Center – Alida Merrill
Rochester City School District – Margaret Porter
Monroe County Youth Bureau – Joan Bickweat, Chris Dandino, Carla Boyce
City of Rochester, Parks and Recreation – Nancy Johns Price
City of Rochester, Bureau of Human Services – Jackie Campbell
Monroe County Office of Mental Health – Dr. Kathy Plum, Neilia Kelly
Coordinated Care Services Initiative -Jody Levinson Johnson
Metro Council for Teen Potential and In Control – Sheila Driscoll, Dalia, Lee, Dunwoody
Youth Services Quality Council, Rod Jones, Dee Banks & Joan Hildebrand
Strong Memorial Hospital – Adolescent Pediatrics – Dr. Richard Kreipe
Rochester City School District – Children's Zone – Jana Carlisle
Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services – Tom Haschmann

The Problem Statement – Challenges Facing Rochester Children and Youth
Safety and Security

In a three week period in the fall of 2005, three teenagers were murdered in the City of Rochester – one 16 year old female and two males, ages 14 and 15 years. In a presentation to the community in October of 2005, Mayor William Johnson issued a plea to end the violence that was taking the lives of our young people. The increase in violent acts on our streets, in our schools, and in neighborhood centers has escalated to an unacceptable level. In addition, lead poison continues to plague our city. Youth homelessness continues to rise, with young people ages 16 – 21 years as the fastest growing homeless population. Throughout Monroe County, more than 12% of children who were victims of child abuse and neglect reported a second incident within six months; this number is significantly higher than the state and national averages. As of May 2005, foster care placements numbered more than 1,000, with a significant percentage representing the city residents. **Resolution of these issues requires an unprecedented level of cooperation.**

Physical and Mental Health

Teenagers and young adults represent the largest group of uninsured and underinsured citizens in the City of Rochester. This reflects the growing number of families who are unable or ill equipped to care for their own children. As of May 2005, there were 198 cases of physical abuse and 2,610 cases of neglect reported by the Monroe County Department of Human Services. High-risk sexual behavior is alarming, with the Department of Health reporting staggering rates of sexually transmitted diseases among youth between the ages of 15 and 19, noting that this age group accounts for 25% of all case of gonorrhea. In addition, Rochester ranks second only to New York City in the number of reported AIDS cases for the youth population. The City of Rochester's teen birth rate has been 8 times that of the suburban rate in Monroe County, and compares unfavorably to the national teen birth rate. Suicide continues to be the fourth leading cause of death among 7 – 17 year olds in the United States accounting for more than 20,000 deaths annually; local incidences reflect the national statistics. Mental health issues continue to plague our young people, with an estimated 11% of our community's youth suffering from a major mental illness. **Resolution of these issues requires an unprecedented level of cooperation**

Education

The Rochester City School District serves approximately 36,000 students in pre-K through grade 12. It operates 39 elementary schools, 19 secondary schools, one adult/family learning center, and several alternative education programs. The ethnic makeup of the student population is 64 percent African American, 20 percent Hispanic, 14 percent white, and 2 percent Native American, Asian, and other minorities. There are 35 different languages spoken within the student population. Like large urban districts across the country, Rochester faces a number of challenges that impact student achievement. **Among these is pervasive poverty.** While the Rochester City School District is ranked 73rd in the nation in size, the City of Rochester is 11th in the nation in child poverty. Eighty-eight percent of District students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch based on family income for the current school year.

A great deal of attention is being paid to the role of education in supporting the City of Rochester, in eradicating poverty and its ills such as crime, and in community and economic development. An October 2005 *Voice of the Voter* poll identified education as one of the major issues confronting the region: "Ninety-seven percent of respondents believe the quality of city schools is very or somewhat important to the county's well-being." (Democrat and Chronicle, October 9, 2005). A *Call to Arms* (August 2005), a report of a panel of experts convened by the Superintendent of Schools, conveyed a resounding belief in the value of Rochester city students and their ability to achieve success, while noting strong recent academic improvements in overall student performance. Nonetheless, the report noted that urban, "dependent" school districts, such as Rochester, face unique challenges in New York State. As delineated in *A Call to Arms*, there remain significant impediments to accelerating and increasing student achievement, which the report argued must be addressed comprehensively by the City of Rochester, the Rochester City School District *and* the community. Impediments cited **include health, illiteracy, poverty, mobility and safety.** As a partial community solution to helping accelerate student success and redressing the identified impediments, the report called for 10,000 community volunteer mentors, tutors, and advocates and challenged Rochester to become a leading national model for reforming/recasting urban education in the process. **Resolution of these issues requires an unprecedented level of cooperation.**

Employment

City youth continue to experience difficulty obtaining employment. In the summer of 2005, employment rates for 16 – 19 year olds varied among race-ethnic groups ranging from a low of 20.7% for Black teens and 32.1% for Hispanic teens to a high of 50% for Caucasian teens. The outlook for 2006 remains bleak for teens lacking high school diplomas, those living in low-income families and neighborhoods, and minority youth living in the inner city of Rochester. At the same time, the desire for work experiences, training, internships, and part time employment after school and during the summer months continues to grow, with a clear mandate from the youth serving community and youth themselves that businesses must assist in providing workforce development opportunities for young people, especially those no longer connected to the educational system.

Resolution of these issues requires an unprecedented level of cooperation.

Instilling a Sense of Purpose and Hope in our Youth

The current framework for providing programs and services to youth measures our young people's deficits rather than their assets – measuring teenage pregnancies, truancy, drop out rates, etc rather than focusing on achievement and positive goals. It is the hope of this subcommittee that the new city administration embraces a youth development model that as outlined here and provided in greater detail in the Appendix to this report. **The subcommittee on Youth Involvement and Action recommends that all programs and services to youth in the City of Rochester agree that reducing or preventing youth problems and promoting youth strengths are BOTH important goals.** We encourage the new city government to adopt the Ready by 21 Model for the benefit of all youth.

To that end, rather than focusing on one program or service delivery, we recommend that city-driven youth initiatives embrace a youth development framework so that all young people ages 0 – 21 years in the City of Rochester are provided with the following:

- ~ Physical and psychological safety
- ~ Appropriate structure
- ~ Supportive relationships
- ~ Opportunities to belong
- ~ Positive social norms
- ~ Supporting for efficacy and mattering
- ~ Opportunities for skill building, including work readiness, and
- ~ Integration of family, school, and community efforts.

Using a youth development approach is not easy because it requires a “subtle shifting not only how we think about youth services but also how we think about, and behave towards, youth. A vital resource to this new city government, and to all youth serving organizations, is a primer on youth development offered through the Family and Youth Services Bureau called *Reconnecting Youth & Community: A Youth Development Approach*. While it does not have all the answers, it is useful in helping communities shift their focus from a problem-focused approach to serving youth to a community-youth involvement model designed to capture the talents, abilities, and worth of every young Rochesterian and American. **Using this approach, Rochester can create caring pathways of access to opportunity for youth and harness the talents of a new generation of young people.**

Relevant Recommendations from Mayor-elect Duffy's *Impact Rochester* -

Impacting Public Safety (pg 6) – While the subcommittee did not focus on public safety as a separate issue, there was discussion about the need **to support the immediate establishment of the National Safe Place program, based on the proven national initiative developed in Louisville, Kentucky to respond to the needs of any youth in trouble and to ensure that an immediate response and resolution takes place that is respectful, organized and solution-based, by recruiting and training community volunteers and business partners.** This national Safe Place program capitalizes on existing resources and extends outreach to any youth in need, partnering with community based agencies, the transit authority, recreation and community centers, local law enforcement, Center for Youth street outreach and Pathways to Peace initiatives, and local governments. Current outreach staff are trained and positioned to take the leadership for this community outreach initiative. Implementation is planned for Spring of 2006. This initiative is universal in its approach to supporting all young people at risk.

Reduce Violent Crimes by Getting Illegal Handguns off the Street (pg. 5) - In a report prepared for Mayor Johnson, a recommendation for the immediate development of a Rochester Youth Amnesty Program was suggested, as a way to “get guns off the streets” and to provide case management and family counseling for youth who possess weapons and may be getting involved in criminal activity. The youth amnesty initiative requires the careful creation of a program that includes protection and incentives for youth and families, with structured responsibilities for both. Lead partners in this initiative would likely be Pathways to Peace, Rochester Police Department, the District Attorney's office, and the Monroe County Probation Department.

Establish and Co-chair a Leadership Council with RCSD Superintendent (pg 10). The subcommittee appreciates the importance of collaboration and cooperation at all levels and encourages Mayor Duffy to play such a leadership role. The subcommittee would like to recommend that a similar Leadership Council be established that is comprised of city youth. Regular meetings on focused topics of shared interest, perhaps monthly or at least quarterly, conducted by Mayor Duffy with representative youth is an essential way to gain information from these invested young people, to respect their opinions and their strong voices, and to gain excellent insights in strategic planning on youth issues. It is recommended that the Bureau of Human Services take the leadership role in facilitating these youth leadership meetings.

Expansion of Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection (pg. 10) – While there is appreciation for the success of the Work Scholarship program with a limited, target population, the subcommittee does not support this recommendation as drafted. Most poignantly, the youth members of the subcommittee had strong concerns about re-deploying funds to a target population of youth who are already achieving in school. The youth members of the committee did not believe that the community's grave concerns about violence, truancy, suspension, teenage pregnancy, abuse, neglect and mental health issues and the other challenges facing our most at risk youth will not be resolved through this program. Instead the subcommittee suggests that a broader continuum of programs and services be examined that reaches a far greater number of youth. They support evidence-based programs as well as responsive community-based initiatives that reach the greatest number of youth in school-based programs and in out of school services. The expansion of mentoring programs was considered an excellent idea, but a broader focus that reaches more diverse youth with varied needs and backgrounds was preferred.

Encourage Establishment of an Effective Anti-Truancy Program (pg.11) – The subcommittee supports the establishment of a consistent and effective anti-truancy program as outlined in *Impact Rochester*. Excellent models currently exist in several secondary schools especially where there is an active and engaged Student Support Center, however the lack of consistency between schools must be addressed. **We support this initiative and would encourage the involvement of youth members in further discussions related to anti-truancy as they offered valuable input from their personal experiences.** Members of the committee who work in the RCSD described a new procedure involving zones managers who are responsible for taking attendance and reporting absences. We encourage further examination of this new procedure. Youth serving agencies supported starting the school day one hour later to accommodate youth that have to travel to school by bus. This may assist in the reduction of truancy and increase the potential for more learning. Potential conflict with after school athletics, clubs, leadership opportunities, and employment must be addressed.

Support Quality Early Childhood and After-School Programs (pg.11) – The subcommittee supports the recommendation for early childhood programs. The subcommittee recommends that full-day kindergarten should be available for every child in Rochester and that a universal Pre-K program be established at each elementary site. As for After School programs, the subcommittee suggests a sustainability plan for the current RASA programs be initiated through the Bureau of Human Services. These programs may lose their funding in 2007 and 2008, and the City of Rochester is best suited to take the lead on finding replacement dollars. Safe and accessible transportation to and from recreation centers and other after school sites continues to be a challenge, and youth should not be put in an unsafe position while attempting to access quality after school and recreation programs. While there are concerns about the city recreation programs, there is also great support for the enhancement of the facilities and the programs.

Use of City Facilities in Support of Student Achievement (pg. 12) – The subcommittee fully supports this initiative and suggested that pilot programs could be initiated in elementary schools in the Rochester Children's Zone.

Improve Effectiveness of Student and Family Support Centers (pg.12) – The Rochester City School District and the United Way have partnered with community-based agencies to develop effective programs with measurable outcomes. There is a best practice program currently in place at East High School that has resulted in an increase in school attendance especially with the highest risk students in the 9th grade, a decrease in truancy, a decrease in out of school suspensions, an increase in graduation, and an increase in asset development. Student and Family Support Centers (no longer called Wellness Centers) require stringent oversight and monitoring by the United Way and have proven to reach a large number of students at a low cost. This data is available from the United Way, as an external monitor. In addition, the presence of the Student and Family Support Centers has resulted in an increase in participation and enrollment in the free health clinic, making it possible for youth and families to receive much-needed medical care. Model pilot programs are currently being developed at elementary schools, most notably at School No. 45, the largest elementary school in the Rochester Children's Zone. The youth participants on the subcommittee strongly recommend the expansion of these programs as well as the expansion of an alternative to suspension program, modeled on the research-based program from Clearwater Florida, currently offered at East High and supported by the RCSD.

Expand Youth Apprenticeship and Other Job Training Programs (pg. 12) - All the members of the subcommittee, but especially the youth members, agree with Mayor-elect Duffy's recommendation that more youth employment and apprenticeship programs are needed. Current programs offer too many restrictions and are limited in their availability. All the youth employment programs report that there are far greater numbers of interested youth than current spots available. This initiative must be championed by the business and corporate community, the Rochester Business Alliance, the Rump Group, and the Greater Rochester Enterprise. We support the recommendation made to Mayor Johnson in his anti-violence work for the establishment of 500 jobs for youth over the next 12 months. Youth serving agencies interviewed during the focus groups agreed that we need jobs for our young community members now. Many youth do not go on to college and finding a job in the community is difficult. Many youth turn to crime as a way to make money. It is recommended that youth be engaged in preparing for and obtaining gainful employment within the community as soon as possible. The committee recommends an increase in the number of shadowing programs for youth in new jobs. Alternative opportunities or the expansion of the WIB programs was suggested.

Additional Insights Resulting from the Sub-Committee's Deliberations

While the Mayor-elect's Impact Rochester is a comprehensive document, there were additional recommendations and findings that resulted from the active participation of the subcommittee, from the youth and young adults, and from the focus groups that were held with community members, including county and RCSD employees. We would like to offer the following:

Promote Youth Involvement in the Arts - Over the past few years, significant numbers of art programs have been cut from the RCSD, especially at the secondary level. It is recommended that more opportunities to be involved in the arts, including music, dance, theatre, visual arts, and creative arts be made available for our youth, if not in school then in recreation centers. It is further recommended that the current collaboration with members of the artistic community be expanded and broadened to include more youth being exposed to diverse local artists.

Mental Health Services for Youth – The increased incidences of serious mental health concerns in children and youth should be addressed. While there are a number of agencies working to provide mental health services for youth, we recommend a closer collaboration between the Mayor's Office and the Monroe County Office of Mental Health to better provide needed mental health services to our youth. New funding sources are available at the county level which should be accessed for all children and youth, especially those most at risk in the city.

Transition Services for Incarcerated Youth – A growing number of youth re-enter the school system with no services and supports. A presentation by Margaret Porter of the RCSD convinced the sub-committee that an immediate intervention on behalf of these incarcerated youth who have been remanded to local correctional facilities and then released with no plan for re-entering school and their community must be addressed. Case managers or other significant adult role models and advocates should be identified for every youth transitioning from incarceration.

Engage Youth Today – The youth members of the subcommittee were outspoken in their interest in having a strong voice in their own community. They were honored to be involved in the transition process, and it is our unified recommendation (adult and youth members) that Mayor-

elect Duffy continue to have a regular open forum and honest dialogue with youth. We recommend that the youth identified to participate represent the diversity of young people and their interests, including those who may have had struggles with the judicial justice systems and who are recognized as youth leaders. Youth are often characterized as “Our Future,” but they would like to have their voices count in the present. They are willing to give their time to participate and have recommended the establishment of a Youth Council that acts as “kid-sultants” to Mayor Duffy and his administration. Providing intentional and meaningful leadership opportunities for youth on agency boards, on task forces, and on city-wide initiatives will move the Mayor’s agenda forward.

Increase Parent and Family Involvement - Youth serving agencies stated that many times services to youth are hampered by the lack of parent and family involvement. It is recommended that we find new ways to encourage parents and families to get involved in their children’s education and welfare as well as in the welfare of all of our young community members. Approaching the needs of youth through parents and neighborhood based “natural service providers” can make the difference in broadening the help needed for our young community members. As we consider the recent *Call to Arms*, we encourage the use of “natural supports.”

Programs for youth and young adults with children to provide support and address Parenting Skills – The numbers of teenage and young adult parents is of great concern in our community and programs targeting reduction in teenage pregnancy are essential. Subcommittee members expressed concerns about the gap in services for young parents who need support in independent living skills, parenting skills and problem solving. Some of these young parents are affiliated with local agencies, however there appears to be a lack of support especially for a young fathers. Targeted initiatives in collaboration with the RCSD are needed.

Programs are needed to address violence, anger management and conflict resolution as well as programs for social development – Subcommittee members as well as other resources suggested that a more active and vital peer mediation program in schools and recreation centers may begin to address some of the violence and conflict that often leads to tragedy and loss of young lives in our community. We encourage the expansion of Prevention Education programs at all levels so that a universal program that reaches all youth through the RCSD and the neighborhood, community centers and recreation centers, using young people as facilitators and group leaders whenever possible.

Programs to address the needs of diverse Youth Populations - While there was strong support for the recreation centers and the programs offered in the community, there appeared to be a lack of programming for diverse youth populations including gay and lesbian youth and those who may have different ethnic backgrounds. The subcommittee encourages targeting young people in our community who have often been left out of systems and who may find themselves alienated from family and school, as well as other support systems including faith-based programs.

Poverty and the Youth Drug Problem – While these problems represent two of our greatest societal challenges, members of the subcommittee asked that poverty and drug abuse be included on the long list of things for Mayor Duffy to address. An active and comprehensive prevention program should be established that targets both the victims and perpetrators of the drug trade. Attention must be paid to the role that poverty plays in drug use and trafficking.

Immediate Goals - The First 100 Days

***** Support the establishment of a Mayor's Youth Council.** Strong and involved youth voices should be a highlight of the new city administration, as promised and encouraged during the campaign and the transition work. It is recommended that the Bureau of Human Services take the leadership role in facilitating these youth leadership meetings, utilizing other youth agencies and city recreation to encourage youth participation. Mayor Duffy should be visible in these meetings, identifying specific issues and concerns for input from youth.

***** Support the expansion of Alternative Academic Suspension Programs.** Using the well-established Clearwater model, the new city administration should examine the opportunities to work collaboratively with the Rochester City School District on several initiatives that target the most at risk students, offering them alternative programs and supports. These programs should consistently target those youth who are chronically tardy or truant and offer them support systems so that they can get to school on time and regularly. Consider the expansion of alternative models such as School Without Walls.

***** Support the establishment of the National Safe Place program.** Capitalizing on existing community resources and extending outreach to any youth in need, partnering with community based agencies, the transit authority, recreation and community centers, local law enforcement, Center for Youth street outreach and Pathways to Peace initiatives, and local governments. This initiative will bring much-needed attention to the issue of youth homelessness, neglect, abuse, gang involvement, drug abuse and violence. It is a low-cost, highly effective program that has individual and community benefits and encourages the partnerships between city government, business and local not-for-profit lead agency.

***** Support Transition Services for Incarcerated Youth.** A growing number of youth re-enter the school system with no services and supports. The sub-committee is convinced that an immediate intervention on behalf of these incarcerated youth who have been remanded to local correctional facilities and then released with no plan for re-entering school and their community must be addressed. Case managers or other significant adult role models and advocates should be identified for every youth transitioning from incarceration.

***** Address the Issue of Youth Safety and Violence.** Young people are very concerned about their safety and their ability to travel around the city without becoming victims of violence. The level of youth violence in schools and on the streets impacts their ability to participate in activities, recreation centers, sports, and employment. Youth are asking for "safe passages" from city-affiliated programs and suggest an immediate assessment of how additional safety precautions, ranging from free transportation to travel patrols and emergency phones can be provided.

***** Support Youth Having Pride in their Neighborhoods.** Many young people want to feel proud of their neighborhoods but are painfully aware of the need for rehabilitation and renewal. They recommend an immediate assessment of neighborhoods that have "eye sores" including corner stores and small businesses where drug dealers do their business. An active and visible plan for neighborhood renewal would make a positive impact on the way that youth feel about living in Rochester.

*****Expand Youth Employment Opportunities.** More youth employment and apprenticeship programs are needed. Current programs offer too many restrictions and are limited in their availability. We support the recommendation made to Mayor Johnson in his anti-violence work for the establishment of 500 jobs for youth over the next 12 months, with the planning beginning immediately. It is recommended that youth be engaged in preparing for and obtaining gainful employment within the community as soon as possible. The committee recommends an increase in the number of shadowing programs for youth in new jobs.

***** Support the Examination of Anti-Truancy Programs in RCSD.** The immediate implementation of consistent policies and practices related to truancy, tardiness, transportation needs, as linked to youth violence is encourage. The subcommittee suggests that this issue may be one of the first addressed by the Youth Council in a regular meeting with Mayor Duffy. Members of the committee who work in the RCSD described a new procedure involving zones managers who are responsible for taking attendance and reporting absences. We encourage further examination of this new procedure.

*****Provide public access and information on youth programs and services –** Many youth expressed their concerns about not knowing about all the programs and services offered for young people in our community. They suggest that an inventory of city-funded and supported programs and services be conducted and that the information resulting from the inventory be made public through a web-based computer program at City Hall and through the Bureau of Human Services.

*****Support enhanced relationships between RPD and city youth –** The youth subcommittee members were encouraged by the opportunities that they have had to get to develop better relationships with members of the Rochester Police Department. We encourage the continuation of these relationships and the expansion of the program so that youth have a positive relationship with members of the law enforcement community and so that they feel respected and valued. Having positive access to law enforcement is an immediate recommendation.

Long Term Goals and Strategies for the Next Four Years

While the list is long and comprehensive, we believe that it will be useful to include as long term goals and strategies the excellent suggestions made by our youth committee members at an open forum held in their honor. We expect many of these goals may surface on other agendas.

- ~ Pursue opportunities for young people to have input in school policies and procedures and with the RCSD School board members;
- ~ Expand activities, opportunities and experiences for all city youth including the arts, recreation and athletics, but also college tours and visits, resume writing and job preparation, and the same types of programs that are offered to suburban youth;
- ~ Expand recreation facilities on the West Side of Rochester;
- ~ Focus on opportunities to develop neighborhood unity as well as unity between neighborhoods and diverse groups, in structured and visible ways;
- ~ Continue to use sports and recreation as a way to foster youth development, to teach cooperation and collaboration and to offer substantive youth programming outside of school;
- ~ Consider the development of a youth outreach center, sponsored by the Bureau of Human Services but outside the recreation programs;

~ Involve Youth Council members in interviews for staff positions that work directly with children and youth at recreation centers and in other city sponsored youth programs; use the feedback from young people to increase staff accountability and staff commitment and passion for youth programs.

Conclusions

As a result of these meetings, the subcommittee identified some overarching themes that influenced our recommendations and our findings, and offered a context for our response to the initiatives that Mayor-elect Duffy included in his *Impact Rochester* youth-related messages. The committee felt strongly that any initiatives related to children, youth and young adults should have a youth development approach and framework, for the sake of consistency and collaboration with other youth-serving entities through the City of Rochester Bureau of Human Services, youth-serving agencies and the Rochester - Monroe County Youth Bureau.

While the subcommittee recognizes that there are excellent programs and services offered throughout the city and the school district, we believe that a more strategic vision for all youth will move the work forward in measurable ways. From the series of meetings that took place, it was concluded that all children, youth and young adults need a home life that is safe and free of violence, access to a good education, an educational environment that is safe and free of violence, an opportunity to grow in the arts, in sports and recreation and in social and civic responsibilities, access to high quality physical and mental health care, and an opportunity to learn how to become a working and income earning citizen and member of our community. All youth need hope and a sense of purpose. The following recommendations were put forth consistently.

Increase Collaboration and Communication – Currently there are limited efforts to provide a forum for youth serving agencies to collaborate and to inform each other of their efforts on behalf of youth. However, it is recommended that the community needs more collaboration and communication about the “total picture” of services to our young community. Leadership for this collaboration could be placed with the City of Rochester’s Bureau of Human Services, in coordination with the RCSD and the Youth Bureau. With improved collaboration and communication, more youth could be reached and a replication of services for the same youth may be reduced so that scarce funding could be used more efficiently.

Affiliation and Merging of City and County Resources – Committee members recommend that the good work being done in the city and county governments could become more effective if there were a sharing of resources or even a merging of resources. With the scarcity of funds, the pooling of our resources from these two government entities may result in an improved efficiency of service provision to our young community members.

Treat Youth as Citizens - Youth committee members and youth servicing agencies recommend that we continue to solicit information from our youth on planning for their own needs as well as tapping their creativity about the needs of the entire community. It is recommended that we bring young people to the table on more community planning efforts in a regular and structured manner.

Use Evidence Based Models to Deliver Services to Youth - With increasingly scarce resources, we recommend that programs be adopted which are well-established, best practice

and evidence-based so that we have confidence in the efficacy of the programs and its transferability. These programs can be measured and are replicable.

User Based Models of Service Provision - We recommend that models of service provision which are designed to respond to youth needs continue to be emphasized as well. Youth serving agencies should be encouraged to use integrated needs assessment processes in order to determine what the children and youth of our community they need and will access.

Provide Safe Places for Youth to Receive Services - We recommend that programs and services for young people be provided in places and at times that are convenient, accessible and safe. Youth will be more likely to utilize services and programs if they are delivered in a safe place and a convenient time.

Increase the Number of Youth Served; Outreach to nontraditional populations – Youth Committee members and community agencies report that they serve many youth in the City but that many youth continue to go un-served or are underserved based on real needs. We need to be more aggressive and creative about identifying the youth with unmet needs and youth that are under-served as well as those who are unconnected to systems..